

### Guide for Future Interns:

- Tico-time is a real thing, and it is apparent even in the workplace
  - There were moments at the institute where our supervisor, whom we were supposed to be doing stuff with, or another staff member who was taking us under their wing, would be slightly late or untimely. This tardiness did not extend to extremes, around 5-15 minutes. Yet, this was enough for me to notice the looseness of their work schedule. On Mondays and Tuesdays, me and other Reforestation and Conservation interns and I would wait at the institute until our supervisor came to debrief us what our day's schedule. It was usually in the mornings when there was a tico-time-like event to occur. There were also a couple of times when we got dropped off at a spot, and we were supposed to seed collect until lunch, which was at 12:00, but our pickup driver wasn't the most punctual. We ended up getting back to the institute kind of late, and the food was not the warmest. So my tip is to be aware of that circumstance and how it could slightly affect your schedule.
  - I think tico time started because of Costa Rica's culture of the work-life balance. Potentially, people having some leniency with themselves and each other keep it relaxed and probably more motivating to go to work because you aren't working a strenuous amount of hours, at least in sequence.
- Work time was sometimes independent
  - I was unsure what the work life would be like before I got to Monteverde Institute. When I first came to the institute, it was well structured, but there were some communication issues between coordinators, supervisors, and interns, so sometimes we didn't know what we were supposed to do at a certain time. This made it proactive, as we always had our own projects to work on when there wasn't a given task for all of us to assist in. This was usually in the afternoons because we always had a given schedule for the mornings of each workday, but sometimes one of our supervisors would be busy during the afternoon, so we had to keep busy at the institute.
- Locals are very friendly and talkative
  - This tip isn't too much of something that you need to do anything for, but it should be something to keep in mind. Actually, learning some Spanish beforehand is advised, even though some people know how to speak English; it does help a lot in connecting to both the community and the culture. My supervisor, who speaks both English and Spanish, mentioned that learning another language helps you understand the world better because some things are better explained or felt in another language. I've noticed this in a saying, "buen provecho" or "provecho," which is commonly said to someone who is eating, which literally translates to "to benefit from," but it is used to tell someone to enjoy and gain something from their meal.
- Food spots don't stay open that late
  - One of the first things that I noticed about Monteverde is that there weren't many food spots that stayed open past 8:00 or 9:00 PM. I think I noticed this when I didn't have the most filling dinner, and I had gotten really hungry later in the evening, but when I looked for a spot that I could walk to for food, I was shocked to see that there weren't that

many options. I think this goes back to the work-life balance and how people don't want to be staying up at ridiculous hours when they could be back at home spending time with their families. I think we are a little spoiled in the States because of the number of 24/7 fast food restaurants, and it's a little unfortunate, now that I think about it, for the people who work the night shifts at those restaurants. I think this circumstance is a little worse in an intern homestay scenario because we don't use the kitchen much, and it's usually our homestay families who do the cooking. I think this issue wouldn't be so bad because I could get ingredients beforehand, but I don't want to tamper with their system.

- Budgeting in a tourist spot
  - Another thing to keep in mind, before arriving in Costa Rica (especially Monteverde), is that their prices are heavily influenced by the tourist attractions that are available in the town. There are around 7,000 residents who live in Monteverde, but annually, they get around 200,000 to 250,000 tourist visits. So, not only are the attractions a little pricey and prominent everywhere, but so are the souvenir stores and restaurants. These attractions, like most hikes and other activities, are not free for the public, which makes trying things outside of the internship more difficult if you are on a tight budget. I will say that if you're trying to go on a tour, or to the cloud forest reserve, or any place really, then you should mention that you are a student or an intern at Monteverde Institute, and they might give you a discount. Use a phrase like, "*Yo soy el estudiante/pasante de instituto monteverde,*" for the discount!